

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Replacement drawings are attached pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d).

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action, Applicants have cancelled claims 1-9 as un-elected claims. Claims 12, 14 and 20 have also been cancelled. Claims 10, 13, 17, 18 and 25 have been amended. Thus claims 10, 11, 13, 15-19 and 21-25 are presented herein for reconsideration.

Fig. 1 of the Drawing has been amended to indicate that it shows "Prior Art".

Claims 10-25 have been rejected under 35 usc § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Applicants submit that the above amendments obviate the rejection. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 21-24-25 have been rejected under 35 usc § 103(a) as unpatentable over Katsumi (JP 61286634) in view of Sasaki et al (US 5,373,670). Applicants agree that Katsumi shows certain feature recited in claim 10. However, Katsumi does not show Applicants' recited feature c1). The Examiner alleges that the missing element c1), namely; a pretensioning device embodied as an elastic pipe which surrounds the energy converter systems in an annular high damping elastomer, is shown by the elastomer (14) in Sasaki. However, since the damping element 14 of Sasaki is made up of alternating layers of rigid (18) and high damping elastomer plates (17) (see the abstract and column 4, lines 54-57), the damping element 14 of Sasaki would not be suitable for use in the claimed invention because it cannot fulfill the function called for in feature c1), namely; to serve as a pretensioning element. A pretensioning element must exert a tensile force; but the damping element 14 of Sasaki is not able to exert such as force. It is only able to resist pressure (cf. column 2, lines 48-61, especially line 535: free of vertical load). Thus, the forces exerted by these two elements are directed in

opposite directions. Accordingly, it is technically not possible to combine these two references in order to arrive at the invention as recited in claim 10.

Furthermore, in Breitenbach (US 5,765,817) the pipe 18 is similarly not a pretensioning element. "Pretensioning" in Breitenbach is achieved by the (non-elastic) solid screws and bolts 12 and 13.

The same argument applies to claim 18

Applicants therefore submit that no combination of the cited references either shows or suggests the invention as now claimed, and reconsideration thereof is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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